

PORTFOLIO CAREERS

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A portfolio career is when you have **different careers at the same time** through part time, contract or freelance work.

A portfolio is made up of **different types of work**, as opposed to the same work just for different clients. There is no defined number – some people have two, three, or more. They can be paid work, unpaid, or paid at very different rates. They are common in the creative industries, where freelancing is the norm, but are progressively more widespread across sectors.

5 Important Factors to Consider & Address:

01 PAY REAL ATTENTION TO THE 'WHY', AND ARTICULATE IT CLEARLY

“Have a clear, articulated view on why you’re going plural, and what you want to achieve. Is it flexibility and less travel? The opportunity to give back?” (Greenspan, 2017)

Being able to articulate your ‘why’ helps you craft your unique version of a portfolio, prioritising what matters most. It also helps others. They are used to, and more comfortable, with a clear label for what people do. It makes it easier to categorise you, interact with you, relate to you. By being proactive with the narrative you can help them, and you in return. Expect to iterate and adapt it as you learn.

Tip: Also think about and articulate how the different types of work benefits the other(s)

The beauty, and the challenge, of a portfolio is that it’s unique. The better you know you, the better you can create a combination that works for you. Everyone has different ‘sides to themselves’ – several mini-selves. For example, my organised self, my creative self, my adventurous self. A portfolio career can help satisfy the different parts of you.

Tip: Self-knowing is best as a team sport – make the most of others different perspective on you.

02 CRAFT A PORTFOLIO THAT TRULY SUITS YOU, ALL OF YOU

“People who know their meaning and purpose are happier, healthier, more fulfilled” (Holden, 2017)

03 MANAGE AND MINIMISE THE COMPLEXITY

“You need to be disciplined and incredibly organised, otherwise you are toast” (Haurant, 2016)

By having several careers, you are inevitably making things more complex. More scheduling, admin, IT, invoicing, marketing, networking, branding. The trick is manage the complexity simply and elegantly – complex doesn’t have to be complicated! Why have three separate businesses when you can have one with three brands? Why spend your time planning travel, get when a virtual PA.

Tip: Get really curious, pick the brains of others (especially non-competitors), then pass it on.

Very few people who successfully pivot their careers do so by leaping directly from a to b. They experiment alongside their current work, building their capability, confidence and connections. They run experiments – trying something new in a manageable way to see what happens. At the end of they may or may not proceed, but they will definitely have learned something!

Tip: Capability is capacity + ability. Make space and time to experiment and learn.

04 EXPERIMENT AND BUILD CAPABILITY, DO IT BEFORE YOU DO IT

“People who plan 3–4 years ahead, and engage in relevant extracurriculars (speaking, publishing) find themselves in a good position to go plural doing exactly those same activities” (HBR).

05 GET READY TO RIDE THE WAVES, THEY COULD BE EVEN HIGHER AND EVEN LOWER

“Life is a dance with fear and confidence, especially during times of transition” (Walker, 2020)

In any job there are ups and downs and maintaining a healthy balance is tricky. Some find it easier with a portfolio career, others harder. Some thrive when priorities collide, others drown. Some relish the quiet times, others feel lost. Some love not knowing, others struggle. Some want structure to their day, others push against it. Establishing boundaries, ways of working, and support structures are key.

Tip: There are 3 types of career relationships: informational (for knowledge), structural (how to get things done), emotional (there for you). Identify and invest in your relationships.

Find more at:
<https://midlifecareers.co.uk/>